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whole composition—a little unpretending contralto solo to the following words—

"Mark how the mother lulls to slumber  
Her new-born babe with tenderest love,  
And guards her treasure from above.  
O blessed Child! with her who bore Thee,  
We, too, will kneel in faith before Thee:  
O God incarnate, we adore Thee!"

It is impossible to convey, in words alone, an adequate impression of the profound love and devotion breathing in every line of this lovely little gem. This is succeeded by the repetition of the first subject in chorus, and leads to a burst of angelic song of the most exalted kind, to which a harp-like accompaniment seems to add an almost heavenly radiance. From this point to the end it almost uninterruptedly works up to the most splendid climax. Thus ends a composition which, though small in size, is, to our thinking, almost unsurpassed for loftiness of aspiration or grandeur of treatment. The words, which are written by the vicar of St. Andrews, Wells-street, are in every way worthy of his reputation as a deeply-read scholar and an earnest Christian.

*Christmas Carols, New and Old.* The Words edited by the Rev. Henry Ramsden Bramley, M.A., Fellow and Tutor of St. Mary Magdalen College, Oxford. The Music edited by John Stainer, M.A., Mus. Doc., Organist of the same College.

THIS well-timed publication contains a very excellent collection of Christmas Carols, which may be easily sung by the many family groups called together by the festive season for which they are written. Amongst them are two traditional tunes, which the editor believes have never before been printed. One of these (No. 12) will be recognized as the air attempted in the streets by the bands of working-men who take this method of announcing that they have "no work to do." The other (No. 17) is a smooth *chorale*, which will be found extremely effective. Amongst the original tunes, we must especially mention Dr. Stainer's "Jesu, Hail!" (in which the directions for semi-chorus and full chorus should be strictly observed), Dr. Dykes's "On the Birthday of the Lord," Sir Frederick A. G. Osseley's "Carol for Christmas Eve" (in which the music expresses the simple words of the Rev. H. R. Bramley with happy effect), and the "Christmas Morning Hymn," by Joseph Barnby, both melody and harmony of which will delight all who can appreciate pure and unpretentious religious writing. Other tunes, by various authors, are also entitled to much praise; and there are traditional airs, besides those already mentioned, which will be found highly interesting. We heartily recommend this little volume to the attention of all who, as the editor observes, "desire to keep the Feast of Christmas with mirth which shall not overstep the bounds of reverence."

*Fayre Pastorel.* A Cantata. The subject taken from *The Faerie Queen*. Words by Leyland Leigh. Music by Henry Hiles, Mus. Doc., Oxon.

IT is difficult, within our limited space, to do more than record the favourable impression Dr. Hiles's work has made upon us; nor, indeed, is it, perhaps, fair to judge definitely of a Cantata by the mere perusal of it at the pianoforte. For a pastoral subject the harmonies are, in parts, too abstruse; and there is a restlessness about the accompaniments which occasionally mars the vocal effects: in proof of which, we may say that we consider the madrigal, "The Tender Dew" (which is unaccompanied), the best piece of choral writing in the Cantata. The choruses most entitled to praise are the opening one, "We Shepherd Swains" (for two tenors and two basses), No. 2, "Hither! hither, Swains" (for two trebles and two altos), the vocal parts in which are full of effect, and the short chorus, "Hark, through the conscious air" (which follows the "Dance of the Wood-nymphs," and has a pianoforte duet accompaniment), in all of which the writing shows the practised hand of a musician; and the subjects are, if not very original, at least graceful, and in sympathy with the poetry. We are especially pleased with the tenor solo, in F sharp minor,

"Oh! why, my heart." The changes of key in this song, although frequent, are by no means forced; and the end, on the fifth of the key, is an extremely good point. The duet for baritone and tenor, "Yet sing once more," and the air, for soprano, "Flow, bitter tears," are also highly effective; the accompaniments, however, to the latter piece being, in our opinion, somewhat over elaborated. The words of this Cantata are well laid out for music, the several pieces being skilfully contrasted; and the poetry, although not of the highest order, is written with grace and elegance throughout. We hope to have an early opportunity of hearing Dr. Hiles's work; and, in the meantime, recommend it to the attention of choral societies, and of those amateurs who are in search of novelties for the coming season.

*Listening.* Song. Words by Adelaide A. Procter. Music by Arthur O'Leary.

MR. O'LEARY has thoroughly caught the spirit of the very beautiful poetry he has undertaken to illustrate, and the result is one of the most refined and intellectual songs we have met with for some time. The several changes of feeling in the words are rendered most sympathetically throughout; the *Agitato* (in which the modulations seem almost to grow from the poetry), and the *Piu lento*, which follows, being especially noticeable examples of "word-painting" in its most legitimate form. We like the song so much, that we wish the composer would oblige us by altering the chord on the subdominant, on the word "only," in the last phrase, from a  $\sharp$  to a  $\flat$  (C, E, A). The effect would be, in our opinion, better with the voice, and it would get rid of the fifths between the two chords as they stand.

CHARLES JEFFERYS.

*Operatic Gems*, for the Pianoforte. By Felix Gantier. Nos. 1 to 21.

THERE is much to be said in favour of these graceful little pianoforte pieces, by a writer whose name is new to us. It is true that they are small in construction; but they will be welcome to teachers who are seeking for progressive music, where the passages are elegant, and written for small hands. Nearly all the popular operas are included in the series (which we see is to be extended beyond the numbers already published), and each piece contains three of the most favourite themes, effectively arranged, and carefully fingered. It would be impossible, in our short notice, to mention the several numbers in detail, and, indeed, as they are all moulded on a certain plan, any remarks upon the characteristics of each would be unnecessary; but we may say that, amongst the most pleasing (as containing the melodies certain to interest the young performer) will be found, No. 2 (*Marta*), No. 4 (*Guillaume Tell*), No. 6 (*Lucrezia Borgia*), No. 9 (*Masaniello*), No. 11 (*La Traviata*), No. 19 (*La Sonnambula*), and No. 20 (*Don Giovanni*), in all of which the treatment of the themes shows a power of adaptability to the mental and physical capacity of a child that we do not always see in juvenile music. It would be unjust to conclude our notice without a good word upon the manner in which the eye, as well as the ear, of the young student, is appealed to in these pieces. We do not usually like illustrated title-pages upon musical compositions; but anything so beautiful as these coloured views of places in some way connected with the opera upon which the piece is founded, we have rarely, if ever, met with, issued from a music-publisher. We would especially cite No. 4 (the Church of St. Giorgio Maggiore, Venice), No. 8 (the Falls of Ferni), No. 11 (Paris, from the Pont Neuf), No. 13 (the Mincio, Mantua in the distance), No. 15 (Remains of an old Druidical Temple), No. 16 (Cloisters in the Convent of La Virgen del Carmen), and No. 21 (the Citadel and Hoe, Plymouth Sound), as really exquisite pictures, which might be preserved and looked back to with pleasure on their own intrinsic merits. We should mention that half-a-dozen of the most popular of these pieces have been arranged as duets; and we have little doubt that others will speedily follow.